A

LETTER

TO

THE IRISH BAR.

AMONG the many occurrences which have engaged the attention of the people of this country, there is none more prominent than the zeal and unanimity with which the IRISH BAR have oppoſed the *idea* of an Union between England and Ireland. They have attracted our attention for two reaſons:—firſt, as originating in a part of the people, which ſeemed to be in full ſecurity when the nation was convulſed; ſecondly, as having the appearance of being the offſpring of ſelf-love, rather than affection for the real happineſs and independence of this country. Who are the men that have come forward to ſupport the independence of Ireland? who are the leaders of the oppoſition to an Union? the men who have lived upon the wages of their own proſtitution to the Engliſh Cabinet—who have ſewn the ſeeds of diſcord in every corner of this diſtracted land; who have pointed out the Iriſh cabin to be burnt by the Scotch and Engliſh ſoldier; who have called their fellow-countrymen traitors, becauſe, foreſeeing the ſtorm, they whiſpered even their enemies to be on their guard? But, *independent* Gentlemen of the Bar, you are caught; and

what is worſe, the trap is of your own making! What a laughable ſpectacle you exhibit to Engliſhmen! what a *dramatis perſonæ* has Mr. Pitt got to act his favourite farce!

I acknowledge I feel for your ſituation, and in the warmth of a heart which beats to the independence of its country, I deplore the deluſion which has ſo debaſed what was, at leaſt nominally, moſt reſpectable; I lament the opportunities which a ſmall and contemptible part of the nation had to betray the remainder: however I truſt experience has at length convinced you of an aſſertion, which every man of you would be the firſt to take down and report its author at the caſtle, "that you were only Engliſh inſtruments, to put down Iriſh freedom." But you were proof againſt conviction, becauſe you were then enjoying the fruits of your proſtitution, and, while whipping and lacerating the backs of your fellow-citizens, were in hopes you could enjoy the wages of the executioner: you will be diſappointed, (and I believe it is according to the diſpenſations of Providence) every ſtroke you gave us, was ſo many againſt your favourite monopoly; every Iriſhman you ſo wantonly, and even againſt the will of your maſter, tortured; you may ſee him feeding himſelf with the thought, that one time or other—retaliation will be the order of the day.

Vain men! do you mean to reſiſt an Union? will the Lawyers and Attornies Corps, the *immaculate* Common Council, or the mercenaries of the cuſtom-houſe be able to cope with forty thouſand Engliſh troops, backed by the population of Ireland? No: You will cry out, like a ſet of men wakened out of a dream: Would Iriſhmen ſuffer their Parliament, the fountain of their liberties, to be wreſted from them with impunity! To whom, (will you anſwer me) do you

you addreſs yourſelves, when you ſpeak in ſuch a tone? We are not as yet bereft of our ſenſes, though you did your beſt to drive us to madneſs. The people of Ireland will tell you, they care not for your Parliament; and in this, Mr. Cooke has ſpoken the ſentiments of the nation: and, as one of the people, I will add, that the Parliament of Ireland repreſents the miniſter of England, and not the people of this country.

Did you enquire into the cauſe of the late Rebellion? was it not the Slavery of the Iriſh People, an Iriſh Parliament its fountain, and Iriſh Lawyers and Attorneys its ſupport? Yet this is the Parliament you call on us to ſupport! No, ſince we have not the ſubſtance, we care not for the ſhadow of independence. We have often petitioned for a reform of *your independent* Parliament, we have often declared to the world, (and on our accuſation is founded the grand argument for an Union) that your independent parliament has hitherto been the forger of all our chains, and the beſt and only prop of Engliſh influence. Have we ſpoken falſely? go to the Cabinet of England, and aſk Mr. Pitt, or go to the caſtle, and aſk Mr. Cooke, and either of theſe gentlemen will tell you, that Iriſhmen have more to expect from the Parliament of the empire, than the Parliament of Ireland; yet this is the Parliament you ſo vauntingly term independent! Such is the natural language of the oppreſſed, ſuch is the language of the perſecuted people of Ireland.

On a ſubject like the preſent, which will ſo materially determine the future deſtinies of my countrymen, I would wiſh to ſay a few words: Notwithſtanding the number of pamphlets with which the preſs has been glutted, and the crowd of young lawyers who are puſhing themſelves

into the notice of the public—you have all reaſoned like monopoliſts, and you have declaimed againſt an Union of the two legiſlatures, as if you were about to loſe your aſcendancy over your fellow-citizens, with the loſs of your Parliament; you have conſtantly evaded the *only queſtion a true Iriſhman would aſk—Whether an Union is not preferable to our preſent ſituation?* I know, and my countrymen alſo know, that there are ſome among you, whoſe intereſt it is to cling to a corrupt Parliament; and that there are others among you who write againſt an Union, that the world might ſee you write, if they cannot hear you ſpeak; but I am convinced, that the truly enlightened and independent man would firſt look to his Country, and then to its Parliament; he would firſt aſk himſelf, what creates ſuch an apathy among the body of the people, when the queſtion of loſing what is ſuppoſed to be the fountain of their liberties is impertinently and libelloufly diſcuſſed by a ſervant in office? he would contraſt the clamours of the privileged corporations, placemen and penſioners, with the ſullen ſilence of the people: have any of you, new-born authors, put theſe queſtions to yourſelves? with the exception of one pamphlet, (which is not the production of a Lawyer) the loſs of the preſent Parliament, and not the loſs of our real independence, ſeems to be the ſubject of lamentation.

But why forget ſo important a conſideration? is it becauſe you deem it unneceſſary or trifling? if you feed yourſelves with the hope, that the perſecuted people of Armagh, that the lacerated inhabitants of Kildare, and the inhabitants of Connaught, who are, at this day, under your protecting Parliament, in a ſtate of beggary and wretchedneſs, ignorance and brutality, ſo unfortunately

fortunately evinced on a recent occaſion,—will take up arms in your cauſe—you are miſerably miſtaken; No, 'tis a conſolation to the hunted and perſecuted poor people of Ireland, to behold you victims to that abandoned policy, which you exerciſed againſt them. By your means, my countrymen are reduced to that pitiable ſituation, when they will find a conſolation in ſlavery, when they will feel a ſecret pleaſure in being degraded, becauſe the ruin is a common ruin; *becauſe 'tis Engliſhmen enſlaving Orangemen and Iriſhmen, and not Orangemen under Engliſh pay, trampling on the necks of Iriſhmen.* You, Gentlemen of the Iriſh Bar, who have ſo boldly and *generouſly* come forward in ſupport of our freedom, will you tell the people of Ireland—who were the leading ſupporters and diſſeminators of the patriotic and generous principle of the Orange ſyſtem? was not the Iriſh Bar its beſt ſupport? were you not its moſt active propagators? Perhaps you will ſay I don't underſtand the principle of Orangemen; I rejoice I have this opportunity of expoſing it to the world; of examining a principle which you profeſs with ſo much triumph; which you have propagated with ſo much zeal, and whoſe opponents you have perſecuted with ſo much fury: I rejoice I have this opportunity of vindicating the names of thoſe who have been ſtigmatized by you, for reſiſtance to a principle which may end in your own ſlavery and degradation.

I will not ſay that the principles of the Orange ſyſtem, is extermination to the perſons of the Catholics of Ireland; but I will ſay, 'tis extermination to the liberties of the people of Ireland. Your ſyſtem ſtrikes not at a particular ſect—it ſtrikes at the liberties of all; it bribes the

the Proteſtant to put down the Catholic; it ſcatters the ſeeds of diſcord between the Catholic, Preſbyterian and Proteſtant; and after putting down one part of the people by corruption, deceiving another, and torturing a third, gains an aſcendancy over all. What is the Orangeman's teſt; is it even a lawful one? No, even the laws of Ireland don't ſanction it, unleſs the ſilence of the Crown Lawyers, where the law of the land is flagrantly violated, be ſufficient to give it the appearance of loyalty, The oath of an Orangeman is one of thoſe inſidious oaths, which, while it operates directly againſt the nation, bears the ſemblance of liberality and patriotiſm. According to that oath, you are bound to protect all religious perſuaſions equally. According to the reſolutions of your Orange Lodges, you are bound to exclude a Roman Catholic. Generous and patriotic men! what do you bind yourſelves to protect? Is it our properties? The laws of the land can at leaſt protect our properties without your interference. Is it our liberties as fellow-citizens? No; the reſolutions of your ſociety ſpeak againſt you. Is not your firſt reſolution the excluſion of a Roman Catholic from your ſociety? Is not your ſecond reſolution, a determination to ſupport the conſtitution in church and ſtate; if ſo, what concluſions are the Catholics of Ireland to draw from your two reſolutions—I will tell you; That the Catholics are not to be confided in—that their principle is to overturn the conſtitution in church and ſtate—that it ſhould be ours to ſhut them out from confidence! Go, ye generous diſpenſers of impartial protection, and tell the people of Ireland, that their intereſt is the intereſt of Orangemen, No; before you can expect the co-operation and aſſiſtance of an outcaſt

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and inſulted people to ſupport you againſt the Engliſh Miniſter—you muſt break up your ſocieties, and bury the principle of Orangemen in eternal oblivion.

Were I to be aſked my opinion, on ſo momentous a queſtion as an Union with England, I would firſt conſider in what character I ſhould anſwer. Were I one of the choſen few, who, as long as they were uſeful inſtruments in dividing my country, were the favourites of the Miniſter, and whoſe exiſtence depends on the continuance of corruption, I fear, I would anſwer (as you have anſwered) in the true ſpirit of the venal—that I am a determined enemy to an Union; but were I a Proteſtant, I would anſwer as an Iriſhman—were I a Quaker, I would anſwer as an Iriſhman—were I a Preſbyterian, I would anſwer as an Iriſhman—and being a Roman Catholic, I would anſwer as an Iriſhman,—That I am as determined to promote union among Iriſhmen, againſt the union of a corrupt Iriſh faction, with a corrupting Engliſh Cabinet, as I am determined to reſiſt the union of the Legiſlatures of England and Ireland. In the one inſtance, Ireland is governed by corruption—in the other, ſhe is governed by force;—in both, it is the intereſt of our rulers to keep us in chains—and to reſiſt both, is the intereſt of every Iriſhman of every religious perſuaſion.

AN IRISHMAN.